

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-4 without prejudice or disclaimer.

The following is the status of the claims in this application:

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (currently amended) A reduction casting apparatus for performing a casting while an oxide film formed on a surface of the molten metal is reduced by allowing the molten metal and a reducing compound to be contacted with each other, comprising:

a molding die having a cavity for receiving the molten metal, and a stepped feeder head portion and a runner which are arranged in an upstream side of the cavity for pouring the molten metal into the cavity, the runner having a smaller flow passage diameter than that of the stepped feeder head portion.

6. (currently amended) The reduction casting apparatus as set forth in claim 5, wherein the stepped feeder head portion is arranged just upstream of the cavity, and wherein the runner is connected with the stepped feeder head portion.

7. (original) The reduction casting apparatus as set forth in claim 5, wherein a molten metal reservoir for storing the molten metal is arranged at a sprue which is arranged in an upstream side of the runner, and wherein an opening/closing member for opening/closing a communication between the molten metal reservoir and the runner is arranged therebetween.

8. (currently amended) The reduction casting apparatus as set forth in claim 7, wherein the molding die includes a metallic mold portion defining the cavity and the stepped feeder head portion, and a ceramic adaptor defining the runner and the sprue.

9. (original) The reduction casting apparatus as set forth in claim 5, wherein a surface of an inner wall of the runner is subjected to a heat insulating treatment or formed by a heat insulating material selected from the group consisting of: ceramic, an alumina board and other heat insulating materials.

10. (currently amended) A molding die for use in an aluminum reduction casting method, in which a molten metal of aluminum or an alloy thereof is poured into a cavity and casting is performed while an oxide film formed on a surface of the molten metal is reduced by allowing a magnesium-nitrogen compound and the molten metal to be contacted with each other in the cavity, the magnesium-nitrogen compound being generated by allowing a magnesium gas and a nitrogen gas to be reacted with each other, wherein a first runner having a smaller flow passage diameter than that of a stepped feeder head portion is arranged in an upstream side of the cavity.

11. (original) The molding die as set forth in claim 10, wherein a second runner for pouring the molten metal into the cavity is directly connected to the cavity in the upstream side of the cavity.